

Message Text

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SUMMARY: RIFAI FILLED ME IN WITH SOME MORE DETAIL ON RECENT JORDANIAN CONTACTS WITH SAUDIS. ONE IMPORTANT FOCUS OF DESERT VISIT TO SEE KING KHALID WAS JORDANIAN CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUBVERSIVE ATTEMPT AGAINST SAUDI REGIME. TALKS WERE APPARENTLY VERY FRANK AND SAUDIS REACTED WELL TO JORDANIAN CONCERNS. JORDANIANS WERE LESS HAPPY WITH LACK OF SAUDI ACTION IN THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN SAUDI FUNDS FOR A NUMBER OF PROJECTS. RECENT VISIT OF TWO JORDANIAN SENIOR FINANCIAL OFFICIALS TO RIYADH RESULTED IN PROMISES OF SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE BUT NO SPECIFICS. SAUDIS HAD BEEN GENERAL, BUT AGAIN NOT SPECIFIC ON SUPPORT FOR JORDAN FOR HAWKS DURING MEETING OF THE TWO KINGS. THERE WAS ONE SIDE SUGGESTION THAT JORDAN MIGHT LOOK AT FRENCH MISSILES BUT RIFAI INTERPRETED THIS AS A SEPARATE MOVE TO "MINIMIZE" COMMISSIONS" FOR ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE SENIOR OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

1. RIFAI IN TALK JANUARY 24 ADDED SOME MORE DETAILS TO RECENT JORDANIANS CONCERNS ABOUT THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA IN PART REFLECTED TO ME DURING GENERAL HUYSER'S(AMMAN 0261) VISIT. RIFAI SAID THAT SAUDIS APPEARED TO BE CONCERNED THAT JORDANIANS HAD INFORMATION INDICATING THERE WERE POSSIBLE EFFORTS TO UNSEAT THE PRESENT REGIME IN FAVOR OF SOMETHING MORE RADICAL. RIFAI SAID THE SAUDIS ADMITTED THEIR OWN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE WAS

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NEAR ZERO AND RIFAI SAID HIS JUDGEMENT ABOUT SECURITY

FOR THE SAUDI KING AND ROYAL FAMILY WAS IN A MINUS ZERO STATE. THEY ALL RODE IN THE SAME AIRPLANE. THEY ALL TRAVEL TOGETHER IN THE SAME AUTOMOBILE CONVOY. PEOPLE WERE ALLOWED TO APPROACH THEM WHO WERE UNKNOWN TO THE SECURITY APPARATUS.

3. RIFAI SAID JORDANIANS PRESSED KING KHALID ABOUT FAISAL'S ASSASSIN. KING'S ONLY RESPONSE WAS THAT HE WAS CRAZY AND ACTING ALONE. "WHY ELSE WOULD HE ALLOW A WOMEN TO RIDE AROUND ON HIS BACK" REFERRING TO PUBLICITY ABOUT THE ASSASSIN THE US PRESS. RIFAI SAID SAUDI REACTION TO ALL OF THIS WAS GENERALLY PRETTY GOOD. PRINCE SULTAN TRIED INITIALLY TO MINIMIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE JORDANIAN INFORMATION THAT THE REGIME WAS UNDER THREAT AND NOT PROPERLY TAKING CARE OF ITSELF. HE SAID THAT THE REACTION OF KING KHALID AND PRINCE ABDULLAH WAS ONE OF MORE EARNEST CONCERN ABOUT THE ISSUE AND A POSITIVE RESPONSE WAS GIVEN TO KING HUSSEIN'S SUGGESTION THAT THERE BE MORE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

4. RIFAI TOLD ME THAT THE RECENT VISIT OF HIS FINANCE MINISTER AND THE GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK HAD BEEN TO SEEK FUNDS TO MAKE UP THE CURRENT JORDANIAN BUDGET DEFICIT (APPROX \$126 MILLION-JD 42, MILLION) AND TO SEEK A SAUDI COMMITMENT TO FUND THE CURRENT TAPLINE OF A DEFICIT OF ABOUT \$120 MILLION ON THE PRESUMPTION JORDAN WOULD BE ABLE TO PAY \$3.00 A BARREL FOR OIL. MINISTERS HAVE BEEN POLITELY RECEIVED AND HAD SEEN EVERYONE IN RIYADH INCLUDING FAHD. WHEN SPECIFIC OF AMOUNTS OF PAYMENT AND TIMING CAME UP, JORDANIANS VIBOL TOLD THAT EVERYTHING WAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE AND NOT TO WORRY. RIFAI SAID THE FOUND SAME ATTITUDE ON VISIT TO KHALID. THE SAUDIS INSISTED THAT EVERYTHING WAS AGREED AND ALL RIGHT ON THE HAWKS. JORDANIANS WOULD BE GETTING EVERYTHING THEY WANTED WITHIN A FEW DAYS. JORDANIANS HAD GIVEN SAUDIS COPY OF RECENT LETTER PROVIDED TO JORDANIAN CHIEF OF STAFF BY DEFENSE ATTACHE INDICATING THE NEED FOR AN EARLY DOWN PAYMENT AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF DELIVERY DELAYS IF THIS WERE

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FURTHER WITHHELD.

5. RIFAI SAID HE HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS CHIEF OF ROYAL PROTOCOL ABDUL WAHAB ABOUT 26 GOING ON. IN REPLY HE WAS TOLD "DON'T WORRY, IT'S ALL COMING" BUT SAUDIT WAS VERY VAGUE ON FIGURES. HE ASKED IF JORDAN WAS HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE US ON THE HAWKS. RIFAI SAID HE REPLIED ABSOLUTELY NOT, THE

US HAD CONSENTED TO SELL THE JORDANAINS WHAT THEY WANTED AND THAT THE PROBLEM WAS NOW WITH THE SAUDIS. SUBSEQUENTLY RIFAI SAID ABDUL WAHAB AGAIN APPROACHED HIM AND ASKED WHY JORDAN DID NOT CONSIDER BUYING FRENCH MISSILES. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONING RIFAI SAID HE THOUGH SAUDIS WANTED TO MAXIMIZE THE COMMISSIONS FOR THEMSELVES ON THIS DEAL AND WERE RELUCTANT TO WORK THROUGH THE US WERE BECAUSE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE THIS SEEMED NO LONGER TO BE POSSIBLE. RIFAI THEN GAVE ME A RATHER LONG SPIEL ABOUT HOW US CONGRESS WOULD BE MAKING A MISTAKE IF IT INSISTED ON FULL DISCLOSURE FOR AGENTS FEES BECAUSE SAUDI ARABIA AND GULF STATES WOULD CEASE DEALING WITH THE US AND WE WOULD LOSE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF BUSINESS. HE SAID THE SAUDIS WILL INSIST ON THIS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR A WAY TO DISTRIBUTE GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO THE VARIOUS PRINCES, THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO CHANGE THEIR PREFERENCES FOR SUCH ARRANGEMENTS BUT WOULD PROBABLY SHIFT THEIR DEALS TO THE BRITISH AND FRENCH WHERE THERE COULD CONTINUE TO BE NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

6. RIFAI ADDED SOME COLOR. KHALID IS ENCAMPED ON THE DESERT SOUTH OF THE WADI SIRHAM WHICH FORMS JORDAN'S EASTERN BOUNDARY WITH SAUDI ARABIA. THEY WERE TAKEN THERE IN A SAUDI C-130 EQUIPPED WITH A VIP CAPSULE. THEY LANDED ON A MUD FLAT IN THE DESERT AND SAID THE WHOLE PLACE LOOKED LIKE A SCENE FROM THE CECIL B DEMILLE MOVIE. THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF TENTS LEADERS AND TRUCKS. MANY OF THE TENTS HAVE

HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING UNITS INSTALLED THROUGH HOLES CUT IN THE CLOTH. THE SAUDI RECEPTION

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WAS AS USUAL LAVISH AND FRIENDLY BUT FOR THE CITIFIED RIFAI JUST A LITTLE TOO BEDOUIN. PICKERING

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